

# Child Abuse and Victimization

In 1998, there were an estimated 903,000 victims of child maltreatment nationwide. The rate of 12.9 per 1,000 children decreased from the 1997 rate of 13.9 per 1,000 children. (Administration on Children, Youth and Families. 2000. *Child Maltreatment 1998: Reports From the States to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.)

Almost half of the states (49%) had child maltreatment victimization rates of 7.0 to 13.9 per 1,000 children. (Ibid.)

More than half (53.5%) of all victims suffered neglect, while 22.7% suffered physical abuse; 11.5% were sexually abused. Victims of psychological abuse and medical neglect each accounted for 6% or fewer. Additionally, 25.3% of victims were reported to be victims of more than one type of maltreatment. (Ibid.)

The highest victimization rates were for the 0-3 age group (14.8 victims per 1,000 children of this age), and rates declined as age increased. (Ibid.)

Victimization rates by race/ethnicity ranged from a low of 3.8 Asian/Pacific Islander victims per 1,000 children of the same race in the population to 20.7 African-American victims. The victimization rate for American Indians/Alaska Natives was 19.8; for Hispanics, 10.6; and for whites, 8.5. (Ibid.)

An estimated 1,100 children died of abuse and neglect, a rate of approximately 1.6 deaths per 100,000 children in the general population. (Ibid.)

Children not yet a year old accounted for 37.9% of the fatalities, and 77.5% were not yet five years of age. (Ibid.)

Three-fifths (60.4%) of the perpetrators were female. More than four-fifths (87.1%) of all victims were maltreated by one or both parents. The most common pattern of maltreatment was a child neglected by a female parent with no other perpetrators identified (44.7%). (Ibid.)

In 1997, child protective service agencies investigated 3 million reports of child abuse, of which just under 1 million cases were substantiated. In addition, 2,200 children are reported missing to law enforcement agencies every day. (Connelly, H. June 1999. "Children Exposed to Violence: Criminal Justice Resources." *Office for Victims of Crime Bulletin*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)

Nationally, child protective service agencies received reports on more than 3 million maltreated children in 1996—a 161% increase from 1980. Of these reports, 35% were found to be substantiated while more than half (58%) were closed for lack of substantiation. The remaining 7% were closed without any finding at all. (National Center for Juvenile Justice. September 1999. *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 45.)

Neglect was the most common form of maltreatment found among all age groups of victims; however, children eight years of age and younger experienced 65% of all neglect in 1996. (Ibid., 46)

*Note: OVC makes no representation concerning the accuracy of data from non-Department of Justice sources.*

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